

Why Children Need the COVID-19 Vaccine

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The Pfizer vaccine for COVID-19 is now available to anyone 12 years old and older. The vaccine protects children from COVID-19 and from spreading it to others. Even though COVID-19 illness and complications in children have been milder than in older adults, some children can get seriously ill from COVID-19.

Here is some information for you to know about COVID-19 vaccines for adolescents, from physicians in the Texas Medical Association's COVID-19 Outpatient Workgroup.



Vaccines Defend What Matters
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- ✓ The long-term effect of COVID-19 in children is unknown. Research shows some children who have recovered from mild COVID-19 **may suffer from multisystem inflammatory syndrome (MIS-C), or long-term inflammation in the lungs and heart.** MIS-C can require long hospital stays and complicated treatment. That's one reason it's important for your child to get the vaccine.
- ✓ Vaccines will help protect adolescents so **they can get back to school, sports, camps, and other social activities they missed** during the pandemic. They will not be protected fully until two weeks after their second dose of the Pfizer vaccine, so consider getting your child the first dose as soon as possible.
- ✓ Adolescents who get COVID-19, even if their own symptoms are mild, **can spread infection to family members** who cannot be vaccinated because they are too young or have certain health conditions.
- ✓ The Pfizer vaccine was tested in children aged 12 and older just as it was tested in adults. As more people have received the vaccine, evidence has **reaffirmed its safety and effectiveness for adolescents and adults.**
- ✓ The Pfizer vaccine for adolescents aged 12 and up **is the same one currently available to adults.** Adolescents may have side effects similar to adults'.
- ✓ Some teens may feel faint after receiving the vaccine. They can safely leave the vaccination clinic site following a 15-minute wait after they get their shot.
- ✓ The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the American Academy of Pediatrics say **no evidence shows the vaccine affects fertility, puberty, or menstruation.**
- ✓ Getting the COVID-19 vaccine along with any other routine vaccines for adolescents aged 12 and older is safe. **If your child is behind on getting his or her required vaccines such as HPV, meningococcal, and Tdap vaccines, now is a good time to catch up.**
- ✓ **COVID-19 vaccine and the associated visit are free** for you and your child if this is the only purpose of the visit. Although you may need to show proof of insurance at the vaccination clinic, you should not be billed for a shot-only visit. If your child receives the shot as part of a well or sick visit, you will be charged for the visit but not for the vaccination.
- ✓ Parental consent is required for a child under age 18 to receive the vaccine. A parent does not have to be present at the time of vaccination if the clinic does not require it.

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RESOURCES

- 1 The University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio. "Post-COVID syndrome severely damages children's hearts: 'Immense inflammation' causing cardiac blood vessel dilation." *ScienceDaily*, Sept. 4, 2020. www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2020/09/200904125111.htm
- 2 FDA, Coronavirus (COVID-19) Update: FDA Authorizes Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine for Emergency Use in Adolescents in Another Important Action in Fight Against Pandemic, May 10, 2021. www.fda.gov/news-events/press-announcements/coronavirus-covid-19-update-fda-authorizes-pfizer-biontech-covid-19-vaccine-emergency-use
- 3 Committee on Infectious Diseases. COVID-19 vaccines in children and adolescents. *Pediatrics*. 2021; doi: 10.1542/peds.2021-052336. <https://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/pediatrics/early/2021/05/11/peds.2021-052336.full.pdf>

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